

Interview with PhM2c Ernest J. Irvin (1920-2001), USN, World War II pharmacist's mate and POW. Interviewed by Jan K. Herman, Historian, Bureau of Medicine and surgery, 25 February 1986, 24 March 1986, and 22 May 1986, Alexandria, VA.

I should start at the beginning. I was born in Ged, LA, a little oil boom town on 30 November 1920. We then moved to Beaumont, TX. I joined the Navy in December 1937 and went to boot camp in Norfolk. In those days it was 3 months. I was sent to hospital corps school in San Diego and after that was assigned to the big Marine base there. I was assigned to the Fleet Marine Force, the 6th Regiment, which went on maneuvers in 1939. We went to San Clemente Island and practiced amphibious landings from aboard the ships that were out there—the *Oklahoma* (BB-37) and the *Arizona* (BB-39), and the cruisers *Chester* (CA-27) and *Vincennes* (CA-44). I went aboard the *Chester* and was company aid man for a machine gun company. We were in the 19th wave which meant that we got off the ship at 4 in the morning and climbed down a cargo net into motor launches, where we tossed and tossed until it was our turn to go in 1 pm. There were a lot of sick guys including those on the boat crews. We were issued a canteen of water and a D ration—an old worm-infested Hershey bar left over from World War I.

China

I stayed at the Marine base till October or November of '39. I heard they wanted some people for the Asiatic Station and I hadn't been anywhere yet. You would go home and the kids all would ask, "Hey, where have you been?" "Oh, I've been in San Diego." "Oh, what the hell; you're no sailor." So I volunteered. I went aboard the old *Henderson* (AP-1). It took us 30 days to get to Manila with stops in Honolulu and Guam.

I was in Canacao for about 6 days. They needed someone on the old USS *Black Hawk* (AD-9), a destroyer tender with the worst reputation in the Navy at that time. It was a tough ship. I wound up going all over China. When the rainy season would hit the Philippines, the whole Asiatic Fleet would go to China. The submarines would go to Tsingtao and the destroyers to Chefoo. We went to Shanghai for 5 days. Then we went to Chingwantao. I got to go to Peking for 5 days R & R in '40.

Everywhere we went was Japanese occupied. I had pictures of it. They would beat up the Chinese and behead them with swords. I saw them inoculate Chinese. This guy with a mask in a white coat would use the same needle on all of them. He'd grab the coolies who were working in the coal mines and wipe their arms and then use the same needle on everybody.

There were a lot of White Russians in China in those days. They would grab them and inoculate them too. We should have figured that they wouldn't treat us any better.

We were due to go to Kobe, Japan but never made it. I stayed aboard for 14 months and then went back to Canacao Naval Hospital.

I worked as a ward corpsman in the polio isolation ward and then other wards. About that time they needed a first aid man to work on the Dewey Dry Dock. I went there for a few months. It had been moved from Olongapo to Marevels Bay across from Corregidor.

In October '41 I went to "C" Battery, a U.S. Marine anti-aircraft outfit of four 3-inch .50 caliber guns. We set up on the edge of the little village of Binakayan near the mouth of a river. Most people didn't even know we were there. We were so far off the beaten path even the Navy couldn't keep track of us.

We were in the field with our guns set up in a turnip patch. Dr. Berley [LT Ferdinand] would drive out every Wednesday in a station wagon. I would bum a ride with him back to the

dispensary because he wouldn't bring me any supplies. I would then spend the day there getting sodium bicarb tablets, APCs, and what have you. They gave me the supplies in an old brown bag. The only way back was to ride a bus. The only time I could ride the bus was when all the ships would let their people go on liberty from Cavite to Manila. I would get on with my brown bag. No one thought anything of it when I got on, but when I pulled the cord to get off out in the middle of nowhere, everyone would look at me. "Who is this guy? He's as nutty as a fruit cake. He's probably shackled up out here with some monkey." I would have to walk down this dirt road for about a mile and a half before I got to our position.

A lot of the guys had syphilis and were getting their Mapharsen shots once a week. I thought that since they hadn't had their shots in almost a month, I should get them treatment. I thought of taking them up to see Dr. [John] Bookman at the section base dispensary but he had no way of sterilizing the stuff. I then went over to the Canopus (AS-9) sick bay. They too weren't set up and couldn't sterilize. I called the Army's hospital #1 and one of the doctors said, "Bring your men and medicine and we'll take care of it."

I bummed a truck and took eight or nine guys and away we went. I wore this old baseball cap instead of my helmet which was too heavy. I had a .45 and had a suntan and looked pretty rugged. Well Bernatitus [ENS Ann Bernatitus, NC] treated me like a long lost brother. Gave me a big hug and shot the breeze with me for awhile. They were working almost around the clock making their own bandages, folding their own gauze. She worked in the OR with Dr. Carey Smith. [CDR] When Bataan fell all the nurses and a few of the doctors got over to Corregidor. They went a couple of days before. The outfit I was with didn't get over till the day Bataan fell. We made it on a tug—70 of us crammed in the hold like sardines.

(Note: The first Separate Marine Battalion, Marine Barracks, Cavite Philippine Islands, had three anti-aircraft batteries deployed outside the Cavite Navy Yard for several months prior to the outbreak of the war. This battalion was redesignated the Third Battalion Fourth Marines in December 1941. Batteries "A" located at Caridad a mile to the west and B" located on Sangley Point a mile to the north of the Navy Yard were destroyed by enemy action during the first few weeks of fighting. "A" battery salvaged some 50 caliber machine guns, which were redeployed to Bataan and put in action at the Quarantine Station at Mariveles near the Drydock USS *Dewey*. They remained in action there until Bataan fell on 9 April 1942.

"C" Battery, of which Irvin was a member, was initially deployed across Bacoar Bay a mile south of the Navy Yard. The Battery was manned by two officers and 77 enlisted men. It was armed with four 3-inch .50 caliber dual purpose guns (surface or air) of World War I vintage. They were salvaged from the scrap heap at the Navy Yard and mounted on makeshift metal bases. The fire control system consisted of an altimeter of that same vintage. The battery also had five .50 caliber, water cooled machine guns. On orders from General MacArthur, the unit redeployed to Bataan about 22 December 1941. The troops went by ship [USS *Pillsbury* (DD-227)], the ammunition by barges, and the guns by land on trucks. All this came together again at Mariveles, Bataan. "C" Battery went into action in a large rice paddy along the beach road between the Naval Section Base and the Quarantine Station, Mariveles, and remained in action there until Bataan surrendered on 9 April. That night the marines destroyed their battery and departed for Corregidor. "C" Battery was credited with 19 positive and 4 very probable enemy aircraft kills. "C" Battery attracted very few visitors or guests. "Our brothers in arms dubbed it 'Death Valley,' while the Japs called it the 'Mariveles Fortress,' over their Radio Manila broadcasts.

On the morning of 10 April our personnel arrived on Corregidor, and "C" Battery lost its identity. We were fanned out like a deck of cards to fill gaps in the rapidly depleting lines of beach defense, of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines. We had hardly settled on Corregidor when our old battery position was making world history. A monument now stands there to mark 'Kilometer Zero' for the beginning point of the infamous Bataan Death March.

Bataan Defense

On December 10th the Japs bombed Cavite. We counted 80 bombers go right over us. We couldn't reach them but we kept them from getting down too low. They said we got two of them. In fact, a P-40 landed near us. He came roaring in and pancaked down in the mud nearby. After the raid was over two guys and I went out in one of those little outrigger canoes to fetch the pilot. I had a first aid kit. Wasn't anything wrong with him except that he was blubbering like an idiot. He told all kinds of stories like he was out of gas. One of our fliers had thought he was a Jap and fired at him but luckily he didn't lead him enough.

We checked his plane and there were no holes and he had plenty of ammo left and the guns weren't jammed. We took the ammo off to use in our .50 calibers. His story was what was really full of holes. He did say that when he was taking off he looked back and saw two of his buddies get blown up as they tried to take off from Nichols Field.

That raid on Cavite got the *Sealion* (SS-195). The *Canopus* also got hit. A submarine tender tied up couldn't get out quick enough. A chief bosun's mate grabbed an axe and cut the line. As it was, he only got the forward lines. He couldn't get the rear and they pulled half the pier away with them.

Then the Japs came back--I think it was the 16th of December-- and got the low frequency radio towers near Canacao. They were used to communicate with our subs. One of them didn't fall left or right but settled straight down like a telescope.

On the 22nd our battery abandoned our position and a destroyer took us from Sangley Point to Mariveles. It was one of the old four-stackers; I can't recall the name. We headed for the hills north of Mariveles and joined up with the Fourth Marines who had been dumped in Olongapo.

They had originally been in Shanghai. They were there to protect U.S. interests. I guess it was about late October [1941] when they left China. They got as far as Manila where their ships were appropriated to evacuate civilians. The ships never made it back and these guys eventually ended up on beach defense at Corregidor.

Anyway, they moved the Fourth Marines to a bivouac area in the hills above Mariveles and they went over to Corregidor right after Christmas. I guess it was the 28th or so when our guns went through Manila by truck. We went by ship to Bataan. They found this flat place between the Navy section base and the little village of Mariveles and we set up our guns up there. They were naval guns. They had strips of steel with the barrels sitting on top. Normally these strips were welded to the deck of the ship. Imagine them sitting in a rice paddy that had the consistency of jello. When the guns fired they would sink right in.

We were also supposed to defend a position in the hills (Pucot Hill) near Longaskawayan Point against Japanese landing parties. Our boys on Corregidor began shelling the point with their 12-inch mortars to discourage the Japs. They'd drop one in the water, and the next one, and about the third would knock trees down not far away from us. You would hear what sounded like a freight train coming in. We thought for sure that they would get us.

But we stayed there until the bitter end on Bataan. Before we were through, C Battery was credited with 19 enemy aircraft. Some of those we hit we saw trailing smoke. They bombed us like crazy once they finally figured out where we were. They bombed the section base a few times and the Dewey Dry Dock. They hit the *Canopus* a few times.

The night Bataan fell the Filipino Army boys went by. They were all beat up without their guns. They looked like hobos--a little stick and a kerchief with all their belongings. I would ask them "Where ya going Joe?" We called them Joe and they called us Joe. All any of them would say was "I'm going to the probince to see my companion." Every one of them had the same answer. They were dejected and straggling but walked in single file. They formed in this flat area our P-40s had used as a landing strip. By then we had no P-40s left. They just congregated there and flopped down waiting for something. There was a heck of a concentration of them there. The Jap fighter planes just came in and began strafing. It was like shooting fish in a barrel.

About 2 weeks before Bataan fell, we had been assigned to the 60th Coast Artillery which was an Army outfit. That's what saved us from making the Death March. When Bataan fell our lieutenant, a guy named Holdridge, called the Marines over on Corregidor and asked if we could join them. They said sure, but they had no way of getting us over there. "You're on your own." He then called the Navy but with no luck. He got a bright idea and called a colonel in the 60th Coast Artillery. The colonel said yes. "Get your men down to the quarantine station in Mariveles at 11 tonite. I've got a tug. You can join my men and we'll get over there." So we did. We destroyed what we could of our guns. They loaded about 70 of us in this tiny little room in the tug's hold. I could scarcely breathe. Right about then someone asked if there was a doctor aboard. I jumped up and there was a Filipino with his arm off. Just before we boarded the tug our boys were blowing up everything they could on Bataan. A rock actually tore his arm off. He was going to die. I applied a tourniquet and stayed with him all night long up topside where it was cool. He was a coxswain on one of the motor launches. We didn't get started until 7 the next morning. The planes came in to strafe these Filipinos.

Corregidor

We got over to Corregidor and I was assigned to beach defense in Government Ravine. Over on Bataan I had learned that when enemy planes came over I could spot them and decide whether they could drop their eggs on us. If they were headed right over us then I knew if they opened their bomb bays at the right time, they would get us. Only then would I take cover. Otherwise if they were going that way it wouldn't bother me. When I got to Corregidor they'd sound the siren when the planes took off from Nichols field or from Clark 20 miles or so away. And then all these people would head for a hole. You would go nuts with that kind of crap.

One time I was sitting on a rock during a raid and this other truck came whizzing by. A chief named Jack Kirbo was riding on top. He yelled "Crews [Jeremiah Crews] wants to see you in the tunnel." After the raid was over I bummed a ride back to Malinta. That happened 6 days before Corregidor fell. I had been pulled off beach defense in Government Ravine to work in the Malinta Tunnel hospital. I went up to the tunnel and Crews said that he was bringing me in for a rest. I said, "Hey, I'm not tired. I'm ready to fight." In Government Ravine there was an Army captain, a mean, wild s.o.b. with long hair and covered with oil. He swam from Bataan to Corregidor. He and I offered to repel the entire Jap army when they decided to land. I certainly didn't want to be a tunnel rat.

In the tunnel hospital I went to work on the convalescent ward. Dr. Zundell [LCDR Joseph L.] had set himself up at the back end of a ward with a curtain and sat back there and smoked his pipe. You weren't supposed to smoke anywhere in the tunnels because of the bad ventilation. After a while he would have the patients come to him instead of making rounds. One patient--a marine from Louisiana (Paul Martin)—had caught a bullet that took off one testicle and put a huge gouge in his leg. It had gotten infected and was still oozing. Zundell said to the corporal, "I think you're well enough to go out on beach defense again." The startled man replied, "But doctor, it's still infected." Old Zundell took his pipe and pointed at him saying, "The trouble with you is that you're yellow!" When Bataan fell Zundell hauled butt over to Corregidor not caring if his patients, their records, his corpsmen or medical gear made it over or not. So that he'd be gainfully employed, they gave him the two convalescent laterals in Malinta tunnel. All other Navy medical folks were on beach defense of Corregidor with the 4th Marines. Zundell eventually ended up with the rest of us in Bilibid as head of Ward 11. I worked for Dr. Clyde Welsh, an EENT man in that ward.

Toward the end, Jeremiah Crews told me he had heard that the Japs were going to let a hospital ship through to take off all the sick and wounded. They would need attendants to take care of these guys. He said I could get to Australia and eventually get back into the fighting. He said we were throwing in the towel. This was 6 days before we actually did so. That's how I saw Bernatitus the night before she left. She wanted me to write a letter to my mother and she'd mail it for me. I said no. It might give her false hope. I really didn't think the Japs would let us live. I'd seen what they'd done in China. Hell, they chopped off more heads than you could shake a stick at. I figured they would just wipe us out and go fight somewhere else. So I told Bernatitus, "Why don't you just go and eat a frozen Milky Way and think of me when you eat it." [Navy nurse Bernatitus, 11 Army nurses, a Navy wife, six to eight Army and Navy officers, and two stowaways were spirited away from Corregidor on 4 May 1942 aboard the submarine USS *Spearfish* (SS-190).

We all knew it was a matter of time. We thought the Japs would either gas us in the tunnel or march us out and shoot us.

Bilibid

They did neither. They took everyone down to the 92nd Garage area except the hospital section. We stayed and worked in the tunnel hospital. They then moved us to what had been the Middleside barracks where we set up a hospital. About the 3rd or 4th of July they took us off Corregidor and took us to Manila and Bilibid.

We went by small boat to a pier in Manila but had to walk the rest of the way. I only rode a truck once or twice on a work detail in Manila to clean up the Santa Anna Cabaret. These Japs were in there with their hob-nailed boots scuffing around and tearing up that beautiful dance floor.

When we got to Bilibid, it was like old home week meeting our friends again. I worked there for 14 months until '43. A lot of sad cases went through that place. Before the war the Filipinos were building a road from San Fernando through the mountains up to Lingayan Gulf in Luzon. But they gave up the project as too costly. They were losing too many men to malaria and all sorts of diseases. The Japs took 300 prisoners and finished it. The prisoners cooked their food in wheelbarrows. A couple of guys got rabies and there was no treatment. A guy I knew was on that detail. The Japs didn't bring him in to us at Bilibid until he was about gone. We buried him. There was a marine I had known named Wallman. The only way I could identify

him when they brought him in was by a scar on his leg from an injury I had treated earlier on Corregidor. He was nothing but skin and bones. Kentner [Robert] had the job of triaging the sick and sending them to the appropriate wards. He maintained records on everyone, particularly the patients.

Sometime in '43 the Japs decided that those who were going to die had already done so and those that hadn't were the survivors. They therefore didn't need as many of us medical personnel to treat them. The Japanese needed people for the big farm camp of Cabanatuan.

Cabanatuan

My buddies went with the first draft--Flood [Donald], Locklear [Euclid], and a few others. I volunteered and went up with the second draft. I worked on the farm. The only good part was that you were out in the fresh air. They had to teach us how to farm, how to pull weeds. You pull the weeds with your right hand and put them in your left. The instructions were all in Japanese, of course. I thought "How can you keep a straight face with this kind of crap?" And then when this hand gets full, you put it all around the plant and that becomes the mulch and acts as fertilizer. But to do this you couldn't stoop, you couldn't squat, you couldn't sit or kneel. It was just bend over: head down, ass up. You had to laugh at something.

I also worked on a wood detail for a while. We had an axe between two of us. You would chop for half an hour while your buddy rested. Then you would switch off. We cut mahogany trees down for cooking fires. We didn't need the wood for heat in the tropics. We would also make axe handles out of it.

The Japs eventually took 200 of us out of Cabanatuan and sent us to Japan. There weren't enough Navy people to make up the numbers they wanted so they took some of the Army people and assigned them to us.

Voyage to Japan

There were about 150 enlisted hospital corpsmen divided into four groups. We went aboard this cattle ship. It was February '44. We sailed to Takao, Formosa. There they opened the hatches and lowered bags of sugar in the hold below us. With a sea ladder nailed against the bulkhead, we crawled down that hole. We cut a hole in those bags with a mess kit knife. Everyone had a little gas mask bag. We would fill those with sugar. At that time the Japs were using the sugar to make alcohol for aviation fuel.

They served us soup and rice cooked in huge iron cauldrons. A crust would form at the bottom of the cauldron after they took all the rice out. It was like popcorn. We put sugar on it was like dessert.

We were on that ship until March when we landed at Moji. In fact, just a few days out of Japan, our convoy got hit by a submarine and a cruiser was sunk. That was the only casualty we had. We were lucky. I saw it happen. When we got aboard they had built a toilet--four stalls and a metal scupper running from it. Someone had to flush it. I volunteered figuring I could get a bath with the salt water hose. Everyone was down in the hold but me. I could see what was going on through the cracks. I heard two explosions and saw the cruiser go down stern first.

Tsumori Camp

We ended up in Osaka at Tsumori Camp. There we were put to work in a shipyard. Many of our comrades in this camp were POWs from Wake Island and Dutch prisoners from Java. We all worked in this one shipyard for about 5 months. Then they decided to set up a

hospital in Kobe. Flood, Wallace, Hildebrand, Stradley, and I were selected along with Doctors [John] Bookman, [Ferdinand] Berley, [Murray] Glusman, and a dentist named Stanley Smith. We went to a stadium in Osaka. The hospital was set up beneath the bleachers and it was terrible. Luckily we only stayed there about 3 weeks. Then Kobe was ready. The Kobe camp had been a Presbyterian missionary school for boys. I didn't learn this until 1963 when I went back. I was stationed at that time in Yokosuka and decided to take a 2-day trip to Kobe.

The Kobe Raids

On June 5, 1945, Kobe was bombed into ashes. We counted 350 planes in group of six to thirteen per squadron. But we didn't know they were B-29s. We thought they were Russian because we didn't recognize the star and bar insignia. We were used to the old red ball and star. I don't know if they circled and came back or not. They started bombing at the waterfront and kept working their way up the hill where we were located in an abandoned missionary (Presbyterian) school for boys. (The school had been closed in October 1941 and the American missionaries sent back to the States.) I had gone back inside and was just looking out the window when suddenly the ground sort of shook. Someone shouted "fire." A British guy named Sydney Chapman came running through the ward with his backside on fire. He was like a wild animal. I tackled and held him down until the fire was out. I got burns on my face and hands but I probably saved his life.

We then started evacuating, taking patients and gear and went up the hill to get clear. I made five trips. We threw a few buckets of water on our buildings and one next to it. In 1963 I learned that it was the Kobe Museum and it was saved by our meager effort.

We dug some holes for protection, one horseshoe-shaped and covered it with corrugated metal, dirt and branches and put all the TB patients in there. We dug another one and in went sacks of beans and barley. They were short of rice in Japan by that time. We saw mostly millet and barley. They had us store the stuff in those holes. There was another hole for the Jap guards and nothing for us.

The Japs were out there yelling at the top of their lungs. The whole city was burning. The column of smoke was so high the bombers had to go around it. I didn't know it at the time but there was a fire storm. The wind picked up and fanned the flames all the way to the outskirts of Osaka.

We lost three men by direct hits and 20 were so badly burned that they died later. While we were trying to tend their wounds (2nd and 3rd degree burns) all we had were strips of clothing and rags for bandages. All we had to keep the wounds clean were maggots from the flies laying their eggs between the loose fitting "bandages." We had to scrape them off and change the bandages every 3 or 4 days as the maggots would begin nibbling at live tissue and nerve ends, making it extremely uncomfortable for the poor patients who were mostly tubercular. The odor was unbearable.

(Report of CDR Ferdinand V. Berley, MC, USN, 19 March 1946)

On the morning of June 5th, 1945, our Prisoner of War Hospital located in Kobe, Japan, was hit and destroyed by incendiary bombs dropped by American B-29's during the large-scale air attack on Kobe. Present in the hospital were 129 POW patients and staff of Dutch, Australian, British and American nationalities. The staff was composed of the following: Dutch--one doctor, one pharmacist, and two corpsmen; Australian--one doctor (on the sick list with tuberculosis) and two corpsmen; British--one doctor (the senior medical officer present),

two corpsmen, six cooks, and one camp sgt. major; American--three doctors, one dentist, and six corpsmen.

I was the senior American medical officer present and second in command of the hospital unit. The other American members of the staff present were LCDR John Jacob Bookman, MC, USNR, LCDR Murray Glusman, MC, USNR, CDR Stanley W. Smith, DC, USN, Chief Pharmacist Richard Lovell Bolster, USN, CPhM Donald Russell Flood, USN, PhM2c Ernest Joseph Irvin, USN, and PhM2c Richard Dave Wallace, USN, CPhM Bernard Thomas Stradley, USN, PhM2c Bernard Vincent Hildebrand, USN. In addition, we had been using several former patients to assist in the work of the hospital as members of the so-called auxiliary staff—namely Sgt. Everett Simon Williams, USMC Pvt. Allen Verne Beauchamp, USMC, Sgt. Arthur Wolf, USA and Thomas Lyall, civilian. This group had functioned very well in the performance of their duties through a heatless winter and a practically meatless and fatless low protein diet consisting of approximately 540 grams of grain (rice and barley) per man per day plus a watery vegetable soup made of dikons (the giant Japanese radish). The Hospital had been endangered many times before this by planes raiding Kobe and its vicinity and on several occasions incendiary bomb carrier racks, A-A shell fragments and spent bullets had dropped into the compound.

According to notes that I made, the actual bombing commenced at 0730, the planes coming in waves from Osaka Bay and starting at the Eastern portion of Kobe and working to the West. At approximately 0815 the planes were flying directly over the hospital. The sun was blotted out because of the intense smoke and pieces of metal, shell fragments and spent bullets were dropping in the grounds. At 0830 the hospital and grounds were struck as indicated in the diagram. The buildings collapsed when hit by the large bombs and fires were instantaneous. Luckily Ward 2, which housed the majority of the patients during an "alert" was straddled by the heavy fire bombs although a half dozen or so of the small type bombs struck the building but failed to penetrate the upper deck. One of the "straddles" however, blew in the upper half of one of the walls of the lower deck. Within the short space of a few minutes the compound became a blazing inferno. Men were trapped by fallen beams and bed-ridden patients lay helpless awaiting the help that rapidly came to them. The Japanese, who had taken cover in their shelters, stood back and allowed us to "run our own show." Every single member of the staff and auxiliary staff, with the exception of those too badly injured, turned to with amazing speed and cooperation. Patients were carried out of burning buildings, injured were extricated from behind fallen beams, and attempts were made to salvage as much Medical Equipment and supplies as was possible. The sick and injured were assisted or carried to a place of safety up the hill behind the hospital. All this was done as the raid continued and, as the flimsy wooden buildings below us and to the east of us were rapidly leveled, the wind came roaring up to fan the fires on both sides of the narrow street that led to safety. It was necessary for most of the staff to make several trips before all were cleared. First aid was administered, not only to our own injured, but to Japanese civilians as well. Later we received a word of thanks from the people for our efforts to relieve their suffering. Three of our patients were killed outright (two of the three were Americans), seventeen patients and members of the staff received first, second and third degree burns, and four others were bruised and cut. Approximately three hours later we were able to move the patients and injured back to the compound. Only the morgue and Heitei house remained standing (see diagram). Badly burned and seriously ill were placed in the morgue and later we were given one room in the Heitei house for other injured and ill. As a large fire bomb had struck the emergency stores shelter all emergency medical supplies, food and clothing were

destroyed besides the other regular stores and personal possessions. We were able to salvage some of the burnt food and surgical instruments. Those of us who saved our emergency medical kits (kits we Doctors had made up to wear just in case such an emergency had actually happened) pooled these and went to work on the injured. That night patients and staff, with the exception of those in the morgue and Heitei house, slept on the ground. It was cold and there were not enough blankets to go around. The following morning Dr. Page (the British Doctor) and fifty-seven patients and staff left for an eight to ten mile hike to a camp called Maruyama. I was left in charge of the remaining patients of which thirty-nine were stretcher cases and thirteen were walking cases with assistance. Dr. Bookman, Bolster, Hildebrand, Williams and Beauchamp plus three corpsmen of other nationalities were elected to assist me. By evening time our small group was all but worn out. The difficulties we strove to overcome and the discomforts of our patients are beyond my powers of description. That evening it began to blow quite hard and this heavy overcast sky forecast warnings of a rapidly approaching storm. (It turned out to be a typhoon). We had our patients fairly well bedded down and were getting set for the night when Sgt. Usui, the assistant to Dr. Ohashi, who was the Japanese medical director of our hospital, arrived with 10 Japanese soldiers, one hundred Prisoners of War, three stretchers made out of bits of wood and orders from higher authority to move us at once. We had made six stretchers out of old doors so we had a total of nine stretchers with which to move thirty-nine seriously ill a distance of eight to ten miles (most of it up-hill). Protests were of no avail so with much difficulty the worst nine cases were selected and placed on the stretchers. Two men were assigned to each of the other patients to assist them as best they could, and in a few instances, four men were assigned to extra-special cases—for example—a nephritic with anasarca. Two would carry him a short distance and then the other two would take over. The Japanese left me in complete charge so that I was able to call frequent halts for rest. In a driving rain with a fierce wind blowing, destruction all about us, wires down, buildings down, pitch dark except where fires smoldered amongst the debris, cold and wet those miserable shadows of human beings, walking skeletons (they were mainly advanced tuberculars) dragged themselves along with what little assistance the stronger men with them were able to offer, for about four hours until we came to the Kowasaki station. There Dr. Ohashi took it upon himself to attempt to procure an electric train which would take us over the worst part of the journey which was all up a fairly steep grade. He was successful and, after another hike upon leaving the train, we arrived at our destination at 0400 the following morning. I need not go into any further description in regard to the marked deleterious effect this march had on the seriously ill. One died at 0800 that very same morning. (This incident has been reported by me to the Japanese War Crimes Commission.) Practically all of our equipment had been destroyed. Patients and staff were in many instances without clothing, we had barely one blanket per man, meals were cut to two per day a mixture of rice and barley AM and PM, approximately 1400 cal per man). We had no medicines, bandages, soap, mess gear—well, in fact we had nothing. Tins were found and put into various uses, rags for bandages, "dry them and use them over and over again. (It was one and a half months before we received the medical supplies so badly needed.) The camp was filthy and sanitation was the worst that I had seen to date. For example, directly in front of one of our buildings was a large open pit, about nine by twelve feet, filled with human excrement emptied from the latrines. The fly situation, not to mention the fleas was really bad. Again our staff, with wonderful spirit, cooperation and empty stomachs, turned to and cleaned the place up. The sump was covered, garbage collected and burned, building cleaned, a fly swatting campaign started, straw mats were found for the patients to lie on, the two buildings we occupied were

thoroughly scrubbed down and in about two weeks the place was fairly livable. We hit our lowest rations on July 28, and for one week each man, patient and staff alike, received seventy grams of millet grain and a small bun and a half per day, plus one small squash or instead of a squash eight egg plants to be divided amongst 100 men daily. We calculated the diet to be approximately 800 cal per man per day. In spite of this, our staff continued their good work--standing their watches at night and day, bathing and handling tubercular cases and all that goes with it (almost half of the hospital was tubercular) and doing all that they could to make our miserable patients as comfortable as possible.

This has been but a small attempt to describe the conditions under which our men worked. It only tells but a small part and covers the period from June 5, 1945 and August 17, 1945. Many of the patients who were fortunate to return to their respective native lands owe that achievement to the tender care, unselfish attitude and undying devotion to duty that the above named men accomplished.

I have failed to mention any names of men of other nationalities who might be deserving of recognition because we had previously decided that the ranking officer of each nationality would handle such matters upon return to his native land.

It is recommended that an appropriate award be made to Lt. Comdr. John Jacob Bookman, MC, USNR, Lt. Comdr. Murray Glusman, MC, USNR, Comdr. Stanley Wesley Smith, DC, USN, Chief Pharmacist Richard Lovell Bolster, USN, CPhM Donald Russell Flood, USN, CPhM Bernard Thomas Stradley, USN, PhM2c Bernard Vincent Hildebrand, USN, PhM2c Ernest Joseph Irvin, USN, PhM2c Richard Dave Wallace, USN, Sgt. Everett Simon Williams, USMC, Pvt Allen Verne Beauchamp, USMC, Sgt. Arthur Wolf, USA and Thomas Lyall, Civilian.

F.V. Berley

Resume Irvin Commentary

I made several work details pulling a cart through town where I got to know the streetcar line. When I went back in '63 it was all rebuilt and I didn't recognize any of it. I walked from the pier about 3 1/2 miles uphill to where I thought the prison had been. I asked if anyone knew here it was but no one knew what I was talking about. It was like in Germany. There were no nazis after it was over.

After the bombing we came down and stayed about 2 to 3 days. Then they found another camp for us. There were some barracks, a little tea garden, and a little pond.

The Japs were mean to us after the raid. About 300 Australians had been housed in that camp and they were sent to Hiroshima. After the war the Japs had absolutely no record of them or their guards; they must have fried with the A-Bomb.

The Japs punished our guys for the least little thing. Their policy was that if you didn't work and contribute to their effort you didn't deserve to eat. In fact, they were doing that to their own people. The old and sick were on half rations. Our people were on half rations. I don't remember getting any rice at all in Japan. We got barley mixed with millet, which was very much like chicken feed.

One time someone caught a cat. One of the Wake Island civilians named Tom got a hold of some wire which he coiled and made a little hot plate. Glusman, Berley, Bookman, and that guy stewed up and ate the cat. For a while I was on night duty and I tried to catch this dog. After missing him, the dog let out a war whoop and I almost got bayoneted by a Jap guard. Dr. Berley joked that he would have me court martialed for being so inept.

About 6 days before the repatriation forces came in to get us they moved us to Osaka to a Japanese Red Cross hospital where we had beds, sheets, and three to a room. I guess they were putting on a show for the people coming to repatriate us.

The Americans started dropping barrels of food. Some would break loose from their parachutes and come crashing down, some on houses. There was fruit cocktail splashed all over the place. The liberation forces took a long time to get to us there in Osaka.

About 2 days after the surrender Dr. Ohashi called us out--that is those who could walk--and told us the war was over. He said: "De Wah is now ovah! There are three reasons. The Emperor has ordered everyone to cease fighting." We chuckled at that. "The Americans have invented some kind of atomic bomb. And number three, we have no more Navy." We roared when we heard that.

They stacked their rifles and we were then free to come and go as we pleased. Oh, we did have to log in and out but no one used their own name. We wrote thing like URA Bastard, Go T. Hell, etc. and many others too dirty to print.

At that time the man in charge of us was a British doctor, a Lieutenant Commander Page. He was the senior prisoner. We looked to him as our commander.

We were liberated on the 9th of September. They put us on a train for Yokohama and from there we took a C-47 and refueled in Kwajalein, stopped in Guam for a day or so, then on to Pearl Harbor. From Hawaii we took a flying boat to Alameda.

There were no parades. By then the novelty was over. We just blended in with everybody. We's go to a restaurant and hear people complain that they hadn't had any butter or sugar. We'd tell them "You should have been where we were," or we'd simply walk out.